Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Program: Fostering Integration Grants (FIGS)

General Feedback

The Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Program – Fostering Integration Grant Scheme (FIGs) Grant Opportunity.

Overview

Home Affairs, on behalf of the Australian Government, invited organisations to apply to deliver grants under the FIGs grant opportunity from 2022 to 2023.

This grant opportunity aims to support a prosperous and inclusive society through the promotion, delivery and effective management of the Australian multicultural and citizenship programs.

The underlying principles of the FIGs are to:

- assist migrants to integrate into Australian social, economic and civic life

- support small culturally diverse community organisations and groups in Australia that provide cultural activities, and community programs and events

- build upon Australia's multicultural success with a particular focus on building social cohesion.

The objective of the grant opportunity is to facilitate the participation, integration and social cohesion of both newly arrived migrants and multicultural communities in Australia.

The intended outcome of the grant opportunity is to contribute to an integrated and cohesive multicultural Australia.

The grant opportunity application period opened on 3 May 2022 and closed on 14 June 2022.

The grant opportunity received 774 eligible applications. Following the Delegate's decision, 83 applications were selected for funding, to a value of $5,471,124.00 (GST exclusive).

There was a strong interest in the program and successful applications were of a very high standard. Applications were assessed according to the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and outlined in the selection process below.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what generally comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criteria for this grant opportunity.

Selection process

The Community Grants Hub undertook the screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. This information was provided to the Department of Home Affairs, who provided the final decision on whether an application did not meet the eligibility and/or compliance criteria. The Community Grants Hub undertook the preliminary assessment of all eligible and compliant applications using an open competitive selection process.

Following preliminary assessment, all assessed applications were referred to the Home Affairs FIGs Policy Team for consideration by their Selection Advisory Panel.

For applications which did not meet the requirements within the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, applicants were notified of this outcome in writing.

Applications were assessed on merit, based on:

- how well it met the criteria
- how it compared to other applications
- whether it provided value with relevant money

Each applicant was required to address the following selection criteria:

Criterion 1 – Project need in location/s

Demonstrate a strong need for a fostering integration project within your target community/communities.

Criterion 2 – Project delivery and objectives

Describe the project in detail including how it will be delivered and how it will address the grant objectives.

Criterion 3 – Organisation expertise and experience

Describe your organisation's expertise and experience working with and delivering projects to your community.

Preferred applicants were identified based on the strength of their responses to the selection criterion and their demonstrated ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Selection results

Eighty three organisations were selected to deliver the Fostering Integration Grants (FIGS) grant.

The selected organisations provided strong responses to the selection criteria and demonstrated their ability to meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Further detail about what constituted a strong response to each criterion is provided below.

Criterion 1 – Project need in location/s

Demonstrate a strong need for a fostering integration project within your target community/communities.

In demonstrating the need you must answer the following questions:

- What community/communities does your project seek to target? Describe their characteristics including ethnic, cultural or religious background, age range, gender, visa subclass/citizenship status and so on.

- What is the main geographic region for your project? Describe urban/remote, socio-economic status, cultural diversity and so on.

- Why does your target community require assistance? Describe and provide examples of the current and emerging issues facing your target community/communities that you are seeking to address.

Strength	Example
Strong applications clearly described the targeted community/communities and described their characteristics (including ethnic, cultural or religious background, age range, gender, visa subclass/citizenship status, and so on.)	Strong responses demonstrated/described: Specific details of their target community/communities such as: • their ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds • age range • gender • visa subclass or citizenship status.
Strong applications clearly described the main geographic region of the proposed project.	Strong responses demonstrated/described: Applicants referred to socio-economic and demographic data (for example, ABS, SEIFA) and other supporting information, which described the project's geographic region, including whether they are urban or rural areas. Applicants also provided a clear link between their target group and their project's geographic region.

Strength	Example
Strong applications clearly described why the project's target community/communities requires assistance.	Strong responses demonstrated/described: Applicants clearly described the barriers to integration the target group were facing, and the extent to which these barriers affected them, such as: • limited English language skills • low migrant employment rates in the project's geographic region • cultural or religious barriers that discourage certain members within the target group from integrating • lack of cultural understanding in the community. Relevant and recent evidence were supplied to support the applicants' reason for selecting their target group (for example, ABS and SEIFA demographic statistics).

Criterion 2 – Project delivery and objectives

Describe the project in detail including how it will be delivered and how it will address the grant objectives.

In describing the project you must answer the following questions:

- What activities will you undertake and how many people do you expect will participate in or benefit directly from, each activity?

- How will the activities address the particular needs of the target community/communities?

- What outcomes do you expect to achieve for individuals and for the community from your project and how do these relate to the program objectives and outcomes in section **Error! Reference source not found.** of these guidelines?

- How will the project and/or outcomes continue after the grant period?

Strength	Example
Strong applications clearly demonstrated or described what activities will be undertaken and how many people are expected to participate in or benefit directly from, each activity.	Strong responses demonstrated/described: • Applicants provided a comprehensive description of what activities will take place and provided information such as timeframe, staff involved and location of each activity. • Applicants identified how many people are expected to benefit from each activity and the nature of how they will benefit.

Strength	Example
Strong applications clearly demonstrated or described how the activities will address the particular needs of the target community/communities.	Strong responses demonstrated/described: • Applicants provided a clear connection between the proposed activities and the issues faced by the target community/communities as described in criterion 1. • Applicants demonstrated service gaps that their project would fill to benefit the target community/communities.
Strong applications clearly demonstrated or described what outcomes are expected to be achieved for individuals and for the community from the project and how will these relate to the program objectives and outcomes in section 2 of the guidelines.	Strong responses demonstrated/described: • Applicants provided details of both direct and indirect benefits the project activity will have to individuals within the target community/communities. • Applicants provided detailed information on how the project will provide the outcomes stated in section 2.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. • Applicants provided projected statistical/numerical data relating to the scope of project and the expected outcomes.
Strong applications clearly demonstrated or described how the project and/or outcomes continue after the grant period.	Strong responses demonstrated/described: • Applicants described how the project would obtain further funding to continue running the activities after the grant period ends. • Applicants described the benefits the program will have on long-term positive outcomes for the target group (that is, with education, employment or providing opportunities to further integrate into their communities). • Applicants demonstrated how the project will continue to benefit the broader community after the grant activity period.

Criterion 3 – Organisation expertise and experience

Describe your organisation's expertise and experience working with and delivering projects to your community.

In describing your organisation's expertise and experience you must answer the following questions:

- Has the target group been consulted with or involved in the design of this project? Provide information regarding their role in, or support for, the project.

- What is your relationship with the target community? How will you work with the community to ensure the successful implementation of the project?

- What is your organisation's expertise and experience with managing a similar project?

- Please specify if you have received FIGS funding in the past to provide this project.

Strength	Example
Strong applications clearly demonstrated that the target group had been involved with the design of the project and provided details regarding their role in, or support for, the project.	Strong responses demonstrated/described: • Applicants detailed how the target group had been consulted or involved with the design of the project (that is, a survey, community forums). • Applicants were able to demonstrate support from their target community/communities for the project. • Applicants clearly demonstrated how the target group will be involved in the project.
Strong applications clearly demonstrated their relationship with the target community and showed how their involvement with the target community would ensure the successful implementation of the project.	Strong responses demonstrated/described: • Applicants demonstrated how they formed and maintained relationships with the target community. • Applicants identified their organisation's role in the community and why it was important to the target cohort. • Applicants provided information as to how the target community would ensure successful implementation of the project.
Strong applications gave clear information regarding their organisation's expertise and their experience with managing a similar project.	Strong responses demonstrated/described: Applicants provided information about their organisation's expertise, including: • the organisation's governance structure • the organisation's main objectives • their specific experience in relation to their chosen target cohort • experience in delivering similar projects.